



**The Logistics & Supply Chain
Management Society**

The Regional Professional Body for Logistics Practitioners

Driving **for** **Excellence**



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Driving for Excellence

Outline

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- Why Accidents Occur
- Accident Costs
- Expectations on a Driver
- Safety Tips
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 - (ii) Inside the Vehicle
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- Recognition and reward for driving safety track record & skills

This guide has been written from an Asia Pacific perspective. It is designed to help reduce the number and frequency of driving related accidents and fatalities and improve safety performance by reducing both the risk to which employees are exposed and the potential to harm other road users.

It will also protect the organisation by reducing the consequential cost of driving related accidents.

It is not meant to replace any legislative or company standards that may already exist and should not be considered as such.

Written by Raymon Krishnan

DRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

1. *Why Driver Safety Training is Important*

Driving is something professional drivers do daily. For many of us, it is the most important thing we do. Thousands of people die each year and based on US statistics, 115 people who leave home today will never return

1.1 Aim of this guide

Transport by road is a very hazardous activity. In 2004 the World Health Organisation estimated that every year road accidents account for 1.2 million deaths and 50 million injuries worldwide.

The majority of road accidents occur for two reasons:

- lack of basic driving skills and;
- attitudes that lead to dangerous driving

This guide, written from an Asia Pacific perspective, is aimed at changing the attitudes of full time drivers and as importantly, the personnel responsible for the supervision and planning of driving activities in an organisation. This guide assumes that professional drivers are amongst the best on the road, but, as the number of fatal driving accidents show, more must be done. The points discussed in this guide are meant to prevent good drivers from becoming complacent and becoming even better drivers.

1.2 How is this guide different?

This guide offers an opportunity where drivers can discover and articulate the reasons why they might be in an accident. This opportunity should not be limited to the drivers, as most approaches to driver safety imply, but also to their supervisors, managers and contract holders, All these individuals have a significant role to play in minimizing.

A second difference to most approaches to improving driver safety is that this guide is written with an Asia Pacific perspective as conditions, climates and attitudes in this part of the world differs greatly from those on the US and Europe.

1.3 Changing Attitudes

A change in attitude does not take place overnight or with just one training session but is the result of cumulative experience and exposure to the correct way of thinking, methodology and attitudes a safe driver should adopt.

As intended therefore, the points highlighted in this guide are merely that - a guide to how driver safety and indeed driver excellence should be approached by individuals and organisations.

It is not meant to be a conclusive body of work on how driver safety should be implemented in an organisation but is rather meant to augment and compliment local government laws and standards and build an awareness of the importance of driver safety to everyone.

2. Why Accidents Occur

Accidents occur for a number of reasons. Some of the more common reasons are:

Attitudes

Speeding

Drink driving

Driving too fast for Conditions

Failure to Yield

Road Conditions

Physical & mental Conditions

Vehicle Maintenance

These points will be addressed in other parts of this guide.

3. Accident Costs

When accidents happen, we could experience:

Physical Damage - to your vehicle

Property Damage - other vehicles and surroundings public or private property like lamp posts, road dividers and trees.

Medical Costs - yours and your passengers

Liability Costs - other vehicles, property and individuals

DEATH!

Other injuries can also manifest themselves after an accident. For example it is not uncommon for drivers who have maimed or caused the death of someone to feel deep remorse.

This could affect not only your health but also affect your ability to earn a living and cause undue and unneeded stress and suffering to your loved ones as well.

4. *Expectations on a Driver*

Like with any organisation, your company expects high standards of performance. This includes not only excellence in driving but superior safety performance.

Why should we look at safe driving?

- Because it is possible.
- It is cost effective
- It is the right thing to do



5. Safety Tips

The following chapter looks at some of the more common areas of Driver safety

5.1 Pre-Trip Inspection

Driver vehicle inspections are an important part of the overall safe operation of a commercial vehicle. A quality pre-trip inspection by a driver can identify defective equipment before it fails and leads to an accident and it also saves the driver and his company expensive roadside repairs, down time and fines. Repairing a flat tire at the home terminal for example results in a much faster and less expensive repair vs. having the tire repaired by a roadside service vehicle.

In countries like Australia a good pre-trip inspection will also help you to avoid being placed out of service during a road traffic authority roadside inspection

Pre trip inspections must be conducted to:

- Ensure the vehicle is safe to operate.
- Prevent loss or injury.
- Meet regulatory requirements of respective country or region
- Prevent unmanifested freight from being placed on board the vehicle

During the inspection, a driver should note the following safety precautions:

- Do not get under, in front of or behind the vehicle if there is any chance of it moving.
- The driver should keep the ignition key under his control at all times.
- Use wheel chocks on inclines.
- Use care entering and exiting the vehicle. Use three points of contact and make note of the foot and hand holds
- Never jump out of or off of, a vehicle or trailer

Some of the items that should be inspected:

- Service brakes (including trailer connections and fluids)
- Parking brakes
- Steering mechanism
- Lighting devices and reflectors
- Tires
- Horn
- Windshield wipers
- Rear-vision mirrors
- Coupling devices
- Engine Oil and Transmission Fluid Level
- Hoses, Belts and Brake Lines
- Head Lights/Driving Lights
- Exhaust System
- State Inspection Sticker (where applicable)
- Emergency equipment (e.g. Fire extinguisher, emergency reflective triangles, Spare fuses)

Important: When entering or exiting the cab, the driver must maintain three points of contact with the vehicle.

This is not a conclusive list of pre-trip inspection items and the list will vary from region to region. Please check your local governmental requirements.

5.2 Inside the Vehicle

Aside from the items listed in the pre-trip inspection above, drivers should conduct safety checks inside the vehicle and make necessary adjustments.

Some of the items to be checked or adjusted include:

- Windows should be cleaned
- Mirrors should be adjusted
- Vehicle Log books updated
- Ensure paperwork for the assigned jobs are complete
- Adjust seatbelts and headrests
- Warning lights and gauges should all be “green”
- Reverse sensor is working
- Ensure all doors and compartments can be closed properly
- Adjust vents and air conditioner or heater setting

Important : Make sure you are emotionally ready to focus on driving. ((This will be elaborated further in the next few sections)).



5.3 Your State of Mind / Attitude (includes DUI)

One of the most important things that affect our ability to drive safely and responsibly when we get behind the wheel of any vehicle is our state of mind or attitude.

Attitudes are a big influence on safe driving. Not only is the drivers attitude important, but that of their supervisor or customer as well. Attitudes cannot be seen or identified in the same way as other hazards. To be a safe driver, good manager of drivers or person responsible for contracting drivers, you must be aware of the effects attitudes can have on driving safety of all road users, all of the time.

The next few points focus on driver state of mind / attitude.

Some of the factors that affect our mental state when we are behind the wheel are:

5.3.1 Stress / Emotions

Personal or work related problems affects everyone. Your emotional state, for example if you are angry or agitated will be reflected in the way we drive and handle our vehicle.

When we are in this state, we generally tend to drive faster and more erratically with more stops and starts.

Instances of road rage also tend to increase when we are in this state of mind.

5.3.2 Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol or Medication

Driving while intoxicated or drink driving or on medication that causes drowsiness is extremely dangerous.

Myths About Alcohol

Myth : Coffee will sober up a drinker

Fact: Coffee only makes a wide awake drunk

Myth: Strenuous exercise will sober up a drinker

Fact: Exercise makes a hot, sticky drunk

Myth: A cold shower will sober up a drinker

Fact: A cold shower only makes a cold, wet drunk

Myth: One or two drinks will not hurt

Fact: Two small to mid-size drinks in close succession is enough to make someone legally drunk in most countries

Many medications, even flu medication, comes with doctor's warning that caution against operating machinery as they may cause drowsiness.

A truck is considered *machinery*.



5.4 Alertness & Awareness

Talking on a mobile phone without an ear piece or texting whilst driving is very dangerous and is not allowed in most countries.

In some countries like Singapore for example, it is an offence for our hands to be engaged in any activity not related to driving or controlling the vehicle while it is moving. Eating while driving for example is an offence as it means that we are not totally concentrating on driving.

*A study released in July 2009 by the **Virginia Technical Transportation Institute** found that when drivers text, their collision risk was 23 times as great as when they were not texting!*

It is not uncommon for drivers to start thinking about other things when driving, especially over longer distances and over routes they are familiar with.

“Micro-sleep” or dozing off for a few brief seconds while driving is a major cause of accidents.

To remain alert, drivers should scan the road ahead and keep checking both the rear vision (where possible) and side vision mirrors every 5 seconds.

5.5 Following Distance

Many accidents occur because we follow too closely behind the car ahead.

Always stay 3 - 4 seconds behind the car behind of you.

If you notice that you are being tailgated:

- Avoid making quick or sudden lanes changes
- Increase your following distance
- Don't speed up
- Avoid tricks - such as stepping on the brake pedal with your left foot whilst speeding up. This will confuse the tailgater and could lead to an incident of road rage

5.6 Lane Changing

5.6.1 Always indicate clearly when changing lane and do so well ahead of time or the intersection that you are turning into.

5.6.2 Check to make sure there is enough room to do so. Many drivers who drive different vehicles forget to compensate enough for the length of their vehicle.

The turning radius of a ten foot lorry is very different from that of a twenty-two foot tri-axle lorry.

5.6.3 Check your blind spot and space before executing any turn or lane change

5.6.4 make the lane change smartly and avoid straddling two lanes at a time

Avoid driving in someone else's blind spot and make yourself as visible as possible.

5.7 Line Marking

Many driver's in Asia have poor lane discipline. Part of this was addressed in section 5.6.

Choose one lane to drive in and stay in that lane. If you need or wish to change lane, do so appropriately.

Line markings, such as double, unbroken white lines, should be adhered to

5.7.1 Sign Postings

Drivers should always adhere to sign postings.

In country's like Australia, road authorities post signs that indicate the safe turning speed around bends. This should be adhered to - especially when driving a truck.



5.8 Right-of-way (includes railroad crossings)

At an intersection, vehicles on the right has the right to go first.

Be aware of pedestrian and children crossings and remember that no one is guaranteed a right of way so we should always be alert when approaching an intersection or crossing.

5.9 Reversing

Many incidents occur during reversing. Every year we read of stories of parents reversing and sometimes killing their children while reversing out of a driveway.

This is very tragic and likewise in a commercial environment, we not only want to protect life but also unnecessary damage to property or equipment.

When reversing:

- Look at your path and do not overly rely on mirrors, reverse sensors or cameras.
- Reverse slowly
- Back to the drivers side wherever possible
- Use a helper when possible



5.10 Ramps

In built up locations like Singapore and Hong Kong, it is becoming more and more common to have 40' trailers with fully loaded trailers driven up ten or more floors to flatted factories.

Drivers should, as always obey speed limits and bear in mind that the speed limit posted is normally designed for cars. Larger vehicles need to go slower.

Exits merging downhill are particularly dangerous. Adjust your speed and position to allow for this and be familiar with your surrounding wherever possible.

5.11 Driver Fatigue

More and more countries are implementing compulsory driver fatigue management programmes that require stringent monitoring and compliance.

In Australia for example, state and federal governments require not only for drivers to be trained but also require accurate and traceable record keeping and for individuals who manage such programmes to be adequately trained and certified.

If your company outsources its delivery to a 3rd party it is still recommended that as a Transport and Logistics professional, you yourself are certified. This will allow you to professionally monitor performance of your 3rd party as opposed to relying on them or an additional external resource.



5.12 Emergency Vehicles

ALWAYS give way to emergency vehicles

Immediately move to the right of your lane, to another lane or the shoulder if possible.

If moving right is not possible, stay where you are. Do not move left.



5.13 Vehicle Maintenance

For many driver's the vehicle is our tool that allows us to earn a living and provide for our family's well being. Modern day vehicles are sophisticated and expensive pieces of equipment that can cost many thousands of dollars.

A poorly maintained vehicle is also more likely to breakdown or fail in time of emergency and is a hazard not only to the driver but to pedestrians and other road users.

Vehicle's should therefore be maintained properly. Vehicles should be serviced as recommended by the manufacturer and they should also be inspected by a relevant authority in the country in which it is registered.

Aside from the above, a vehicle should be inspected daily and before moving off after it has been loaded. There are many types of inspection that can be carried out and some of these have been covered in Section 5.1. and 5.2

5.14 Unsafe Conditions

Conditions such as terrain, weather and night driving affect both the driver and performance of a vehicle. A fully loaded vehicle also handles very differently from an empty vehicle.

In countries like Korea and Japan, winter conditions make driving more difficult. Monsoon rains which are experienced in many Asia Pacific countries also require the driver to take extra precautions.

Identifying Slippery Surfaces

Shaded Areas – will remain slippery or icy after open areas have dried up or melted.

Bridges – freeze before roads do.

Melting Ice – will make roads very slick

Black Ice – is formed when temperatures are below freezing and the roads look wet. This is a very dangerous condition.

Drivers should also note that oil mixes with water just after the rain begins and this makes the road very slippery.

In some cases, when driving through puddles for instance, the tyres of your vehicle may lose contact with the road surface. This is a condition known as hydroplaning.

Very often, only one wheel or side of a vehicle is affected as puddles or flooding occurs in a particular spot in the road. This could cause the vehicle to pull slightly to one side of the road or in extreme circumstances (normally high speed) spin out of control.

When this happens, you should:

- Release the accelerator
- Refrain from braking and allow the vehicle to slow down

Hydroplaning can occur at speeds as low as 50 km / h and worn tread and incorrect tyre pressure increasing the likelihood of this.

All vehicles should be equipped with some basic tools and equipment. If you are operating your vehicle in winter, additional items are required, such as:

- Scraper with brush on one end
- Snow shovel
- Warning devices
- Sleeping bags or blankets
- Light / matches, candle & high energy food

5.15 Defensive Driving

There have been many items highlighted in the preceding points. To end of, we will focus on perhaps the most important aspect of safe driving - Defensive Driving.

Defensive driving is based upon being able to spot dangers from behind the wheel. In any driving scene, there will be hazards that can be easily seen and some which can be anticipated. There are other however which will never be seen no matter how well you are trained.

We can learn to recognise potential problems like dangerous intersections or places where pedestrians will suddenly appear, but it is almost impossible to recognise a driver who is tired, confused or pre-occupied or one who wants to get there first.

Be being a defensive driver, we can practice spotting visible hazards but we must also be aware that there are dangers we will never be able to see. The good defensive driver can anticipate this and adjust his driving accordingly.

A good defensive driver is one who is calm and reflective. This means that we need to change our own behaviour before we can expect others to change theirs.

Road safety starts with you!

6. Recognition and reward for driving safety track record & skills

It is recommended that a driver or team of drivers who maintains a good safety track record over a period of time be recognised and / or rewarded for this.

The basis and formula for this can and will vary from organisation to organisation.

